THE EIGHTH DAY.

9th March 1921.

The Assembly met at 12 noon on Wednesday, the 9th March 1921.

101. The necessity for extending to the Krishnanvaga community the concessions granted to similar communities backward in point of education.

Mr. M. Bhutalingam Pillai (Member, Nominated) detailed the early history of the Krishnanvaga community, their immigration into the country and the rights and privileges conferred upon them by the then rulers of the land, and pointed out that the community was purely an agricultural one with no claim to general literacy, the percentage of literacy among the members thereof being only 3 or 4. There was only one Krishnanvaga graduate who had still not secured a permanent appointment under Government and the members of the community did not appreciate the value of education. To remedy those defects, the Member made the following suggestions:—

(1) that the members of his community be granted the same educational concessions as those enjoyed by Mahomedans and other backward communities;

(2) that they be admitted into the College Hostel;

(3) that the schools situated near the habitations of the members of his community be granted special grants-in-aid;

(4) that arrangements be made by the officers of the Co-operative and Agricultural departments for periodical lectures being delivered to them;

(5) that a qualified man from the community be sent for agricultural training;

(6) that qualified members of the community already in service be given adequate encouragement, and that, other qualifications being equal, preference be given to Krishnanvaga applicants;

(7) that they be given free admission to the Nair Brigade; and

(8) that they be given the right to return a separate Member to the Popular Assembly and to the Legislative Council.

Dewan's reply.—I do not think it is a disputed fact that education is backward in your community. The question is whether the community is in a position to improve itself or whether any extraneous help is needed. You are not a poor community. You are a community of landowners, and if education is backward in your community, it rests with you to improve it. Educated men like you must do propoganda work, by pointing out the advantages of education to the other members of the community, and see that education advances in the community. Government have provided facilities for educating the people. I do not see why your community should not avail itself of them. I do not see why any special facilities should be created for you. I do not think that the concession given to the other communities referred to by you should be extended to your community, since it is not a poor community. If you say that yours is a poor community, you put forward a plea which will have to be investigated. My information is that the Krishnanvagakars are a prosperous and well-to-do agricultural community and that they do not stand in need of Government help as some other communities do. If you challenge that statement, an enquiry will have to be made.

Member.—I challenge that statement.

Dewan.—Then, I promise you a further enquiry.

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As regards admission into the College Hostel, it is the policy of Government to admit students from all communities. Arrangements are accordingly being made in the new Hostel that is being built.

As regards your request to select one of your men for training in agriculture, I may tell you that a Board has been constituted with the Director of Agriculture and one or two non-official gentlemen as members for selecting eight young men who will be sent to the Agricultural College at Poona and Nagpur for undergoing the prescribed course of training. The fact will be advertised. If there are qualified men in your community, they may appear before the Board, and if the Board selects your men, I shall be very glad.

Member.—When there are many applicants with equal qualifications, our men cannot succeed. So it is that I say that some preference should be shown to our men.

Dewan.—We cannot be giving preference to each and every community. The Board is a responsible body. Why can not your men appear before the Board along with others? You may explain to the Board the condition of your community.

In regard to promotions and confirmations, the principle of Government has been and is that representation of all classes of people should be considered in the matter of recruitment. But when a man has been appointed, his confirmation and promotion should depend entirely on seniority and merit. He will not be promoted merely because he is a member of this community or that. You say that the only graduate in your community has not been confirmed in his appointment. Perhaps, he is a junior in service who cannot in fairness be confirmed over the heads of other people. All that I can say is that we shall try to get qualified men from all communities, but their confirmation and promotion will depend upon merit, seniority and such other considerations.

102. Steps to improve education among the Mahomedans of Travancore by opening more Mahomedan schools, employing only Mahomedan teachers in those schools, granting more scholarships and teaching industrial subjects.

Sahib Bahadur G. Sayyid Taha Sahib (Member, Nominated) urged that schools should be opened in every Mahomedan village at Government cost for both boys and girls of the Mahomedan community. He pointed out that Arabic munshis had not yet been appointed in several schools including purely Mahomedan schools, although the Government promised to do so more than two years ago. That was a serious defect calling for immediate remedy, since it deterred many Mahomedan pupils from seeking admission to schools. Another circumstance which detracted from the popularity of these schools was the inadequacy of the time allotted for the teaching of Arabic. Under a Government order, instruction in Arabic and the Koran was given for half an hour for the Mahomedan pupils in Classes I to IV together. At least one full period was required for the purpose every day, and the existing arrangement of devoting half an hour for the teaching of Arabic was unsatisfactory in every way. The Member complained that some of the headmasters of schools did not adhere to the rule regarding the noon-day interval on Fridays. In conclusion, he requested that Fridays and Saturdays be declared holidays for Mahomedan schools, that the Mahomedan Inspector be given more powers in regard to Mahomedan schools and the appointment of Arabic munshis, and that arrangements be made for imparting industrial education to Mahomedan pupils.

Dewan's reply.—Arabic munshis have not been appointed because no qualified men are available. You have referred to a Government order and said that it directs that instruction in Arabic and in the Koran should be given to all the classes together. It is not so. In the morning instruction is to be given to students of two classes and in the evening to the students of the remaining two. This is in the case of mixed schools where both Hindu and Mahomedan students are admitted. In purely Mahomedan schools Arabic is taught just like other subjects.

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